CLAIMS

1. A method for administering conferencing resources in a communications system comprising a plurality of terminals and a conference server, the method comprising:

transmitting from a first terminal to the server a first message comprising a request for a resource capable of sustaining a conference call;

allocating by means of the server a network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining the conference call; and

transmitting from the server to the first terminal a second message comprising the network address.

2. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of transmitting from the first terminal to at least one other terminal a third message comprising the network address.

3. A method according to claim 2 further comprising initiating connections from the first terminal and the said other terminal to the network address to establish a conference call between the first terminal and the said other terminal.

4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the step of transmitting the third message comprises transmitting from the first terminal to at least two other terminals the third message comprising the network address; and wherein the initiating step comprises initiating connections from the first terminal and the said other terminals to the network address to establish the conference call between the first terminal and the said other terminals.

5. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the messages are SIP messages.

6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the first message is an INVITE message.

7. A message according to claim 5 or claim 6 wherein the second message is a redirection message.

8. A message according to any of claims 5 to 7 as dependent on claim 2 wherein the third message is a REFER message.

9. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the network address is a uniform resource identifier.

10. A method according to claim 9 wherein the network address is a dynamically generated uniform resource identifier.

11. A method according to any preceding claim wherein on establishment of the conference call the resource merges data transmitted to the network by each of the terminals that are parties to the conference call.

12. A conference server for administering conferencing resources in a communications system comprising a plurality of terminals, the conference server comprising:

a receiver unit for receiving from a first terminal a first message comprising a request for a resource capable of sustaining a conference call;

an allocation unit for allocating a network address identifying a resource capable of sustaining the conference call; and

a transmission unit for transmitting to the first terminal a second message comprising the network address.

13. A communications system comprising a conference server as claimed in claim 12, and a plurality of terminals including the first terminal.

14. A communications system according to claim 13 wherein the first terminal is adapted to transmit to at least one other terminal a third message comprising the network address.

15. A communications system according to claim 14 wherein the first terminal and the said other terminal are adapted to initiate connections to the network address to establish a conference call between the first terminal and the said other terminal.

16. A communications system according to claim 15 wherein the first terminal is adapted to transmit to at least two other terminals the third message comprising the network address; and wherein the first terminal and the said other terminals are adapted to initiate connections to the network address to establish a conference call between the first terminal and the said other terminals.

17. A communications system according to any of claims 13 to 16 wherein the messages are SIP messages.

18. A communications system according to claim 17 wherein the first message is an INVITE message.

19. A communications system according to claim 17 or claim 18 wherein the second message is a redirection message.

20. A communications system according to any of claims 17 to 19 as dependent on claim 14 wherein the third message is a REFER message.

21. A communications system according to any of claims 13 to 20 wherein the network address is a uniform resource identifier.

22. A communications system according to claim 21 wherein the network address is a dynamically generated uniform resource identifier.

23. A communications system according to any of claims 13 to 22 wherein on establishment of the conference call the resource is adapted to merge data transmitted to the network by each of the terminals that are parties to the conference call.